SOURCES (SHRI MANUBHAI KOTADIA): (a) to (d) After examination, the project was returned to the State Government in December, 1989 because it was seen that, among others, hydrological and geological studies for reservoir were not fully carried out, as required.

Clearance of IInd Phase of SriRama Sagar Project

990. DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDDY: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government have received the project report of IInd phase of Srirama Sagar Project which will involve an expenditure of Rs. 450 crores from the State Government of Andhra Pradesh;

(b) whether the project has been cleared;

(c) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(d) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI MANUBHAI KOTADIA): (a) to (d) After examination, it was observed that water as proposed was not available for meeting the requirements of this project. The project has, therefore, been returned to the State Government in May, 1989.

Seizure of Gold Biscuits from a Maruti car in Sirsa, Haryana

991. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that gold biscuits weighing around 47 Kgs. and valued at around Rs. 1.6 crore were recently seized from a Maruti car at Dabwali Mandi, near Sirsa (Haryana) by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence; and

(b) whether this seizure has revealed any gang of gold smugglers; if so, what are the details thereof and its *modus-operandi*?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANIL SHASTRI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. On 5th April, 1990, the Officers of Directorate of Revenue Intelligence intercepted a Maruti car at Sirsa (Haryana). Rummaging of the car resulted in the recovery of 400 foreign marked gold biscuits weighing about 47 Kgs valued at Rs. 1.6 Crores approximately, from the cavities in he doors of the car. The gold and Maruti car were seized. The two occupants of the car namely, Sukhdav Singh alias Fauji and Nirmal Singh alias Nimma who were members of a gang engaged in smuggling were arrested and thereafter detained under the provisions of Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act, 1974 on 18th April, 1990.

Steps to check smuggling activities

992. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that smuggling of contraband goods such as gold, silver, drugs, electronic items; etc. have been consistently on the rise;

(b) if so, what is the comparative percentage of rise in the smuggling of contraband goods during 1988, 1989 and 1990 till date;

(c) which of the identified routes have been found to be continuous weak spots and what fresh steps have been taken to strengthen these weak spots;

(d) what is the role of the State Governments to prevent smuggling activities; and

(e) what are the details of the steps being taken by Government to remove the deficiencies to check smuggling?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANIL SHASTRI): (a) to (e) It is not possible to estimate the quantum of contraband goods being smuggled into or out of the country. However, the value of seizures of contraband goods including gold, silver, drugs; electronic goods, etc. effected during the last 3 calendar years as given in the table below show an increasing trend.

Year	Value of contraband seized (Rs. in crores)
1988 . . .	443.14
1989 . . .	554.59
1990 . . . (Upto 14-5-90)	26 .62

*(Figure is provisional)

Contraband goods are smuggled into and out of the country through the land borders, the coastline and through the international airports and sea ports. The anti-smuggling agencies have been geared up at all the vulnerable points. Sophisticated equipment like X-ray Baggage Machines, Metal Detectors and Night vision binaculors are being increasingly used. Self-loading rifles have also been supplied wherever considered necessary. Close co-ordination is being maintained amongst all the agencies concerned in the detection and prevention of smuggling. The assistance of the various agencies of the State Governments is taken for preventing smuggling activities whenever considered necessary. The State Governments are also empowered to detain persons involved in smuggling activities under the Preventive Detention Laws.

Long Term Fiscal Policy

993. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 1162 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 22nd March, 1990 and state:

(a) whether Government have since formulated a long term fiscal policy; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANIL SHASTRI): (a) and (b) The new Long Term Fiscal Policy for the period 1990-95 is still under formulation.

Processing Charges for Cheques

994. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal from the commercial banks to charge processing charges for cheques from the clients;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) whether such a step will increase the banking cost and will have adverse impact on the final price index for different items?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANIL SHASTRI): (a) and (b) To facilitate faster clearance of cheques and to improve customer service, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) provides mechanised cheque processing service in the Clearing Houses at Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta and Madras. In keeping with the well established practice of sharing costs for operating the Clearing House by member banks, RBI proposes to recover cheque processing charges from member banks on a no-profit-no-loss basis to cover the operating expenses incurred by it on equip-